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THE

PHŒBIAD.

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A POEM.

ADDRESSED TO THE

EDITOR OF THE ORACLE.

Written in the Year 1790.

PHŒBIAD.

ADDRESSED

TO THE EDITOR OF THE ORACLE.

ARE there no virtues then to grace our iſle?
Or do they lurk beneath the great man's ſmile?
Does Charity no more extend her hand?
Or kindred feelings riſe at her command?

Or

Or ſtubborn patience that defies the rod
Exalt the ſuffering Martyr to a God?
Muſt fortune's Minions enjoy the blaze
And brighten in the ſunſhine of thy praiſe?
Do no neglected flow'rets of the mead,
No tender bloſſoms hang the drooping head,
That might revive beneath its foſtering dew,
And ſpread their riſing charms to public view?
In the dramatic ſcenery of the day
Muſt theſe dull Figurantis lead the way?
Shall gilded vanities attract the eye
And thread-bare Merit paſs unheeded by?
Are all theſe baſeleſs fabrics of the great,
Theſe antic mummeries of exal'ed ſtate,
The Courtier's dreſs, the Sportſman's mad career
Or betts depending for the enſuing year,

Are

Are theſe wild frolics then the only news
That each dull page the ſame dull liſt renews?
Shall the bribed Preſs its powerful influence lend
To ſpoil thoſe morals that it ought to mend?
Heavens, what a Chaos of the brain is here!
Augean ſtables in each file appear!
As Amram's ſon brought vermin from the north,
Or Calot's dragons vomit inſects forth,
Thy venal Paragraphs infect our ears
With puny Commoners and priggiſh Peers;
Retrace the errors of each brainleſs youth;
And art thou then the ORACLE of TRUTH?
Or does that radiance which illumes thy page
Add luſtre to the follies of the age?
In the rank ſoil of vice do laurels grow,
Or only bloom around the Miſcreant's brow?

Shall emblems of ETERNAL WISDOM join
To grace Corruption with her charms divine?
Or muſt we raiſe our optics to the ſkies
To ſee where every dirty Grub-worm lies?
Immerge in filth and folios to the chin
To know who's come, who's gone, who's out, who's in?
Pace round each palace, graſp at each eſtate,
Debaſe ourſelves to emulate the great?
Treble the weight of taxes to explore
What hopeful Lordlings land on foreign ſhore?
If youth and fortune fill the ſwelling ſail,
Like a ſtaunch blood-hound keep them ſtill in trail?
Some half-ſaved fop inceſſantly purſue,
Or ſpendthrift heir? Nay, read and liſten too,
As if compulſion were its own reward
To the vile twang of each relentleſs Bard

Who

Who perſecutes us with poetic rage;
Each Will-of-wiſp of the benighted age
That in the mire of nonſenſe ſinks us deeper?
Or is each booby then his brother's keeper?
Whilſt the good-natured Critic ſlips between,
Like the chief Juggler of the mimic ſcene,
And gravely tells us, what new beauties riſe!
What charming ſentiments! how good! how wiſe!
What lines ſhould reach the heart, and eke the noſe,
That he may twitch us whereſoe'er he goes,
Or in whatever clime the Muſe may roam
Her thrifty accents may be heard at home.
If haply ſome ingenious thought we find,
The ideot-comment follows cloſe behind;
The well-paid ſatire or hard-laboured joke;
Where Attic fire is loſt in Britiſh ſmoke.

And when our thrifty Quidnuncs of renown
Lock up their cheſts and ſcour the darkened town,
Or poſt to Lloyd's in ſearch of ſomething new,
A ſpruce young Coxcomb riſes to their view;
Or in the hiſtory of ſome tongiſh Ape
Whoſe head is loſt amidſt a world of cape,
Their leſſening news and leſſening lamps deplore
And pay the forfeit of their freaks twice o'er.
If in this outrage on realities,
This trumpet ſacred to venalities,
On ſome dark column of the ebon page,
The Sanctum Sanctorum of babbling age,
Where all the ſcattered ſhades of dullneſs join,
Perched up in mockery of ſtate divine,
Some mis-ſpelt city or high-ſounding name
Like pompous Heralds great events proclaim,

Portend

Portend the fall of ſome illuſtrious Houſe,
The mountain labours, and brings forth a mouſe.
The cream of Gazetteers too old for uſe,
Odd ends and paragraphs of public news
In languages but little underſtood,
Which, God knows! may be either bad or good,
But all arrived at moſt enormous coſt
By that ſame ſpecial Courier called the poſt,
Collected in this precious winding bout
Of home-invented nonſenſe long drawn out,
Are piouſly proclaimed by good John Bull
Whoſe all-devouring maw was never yet crammed full,
Are daily echoed in eternal chime
With variations ſuited to the clime,
Like relique rings compoſed of Martyrs' hair,
With many a hundred-weight of bench or chair,

Or

Or inſtruments which murdered this or that,
As if a Saint had more lives than a cat,
Till nought of the Original appears
But the bare ſkeleton of names and years.

Or if the Courier comes a day too late,
Some Grub-ſtreet runner from his precious pate
Explains moſt fully how the matter paſt,
How he had heard the whole from firſt to laſt,
But wanting confirmation had ſuppreſt;
Blackballs his rivals too to crown the jeſt;
Expatiates largely on his own ſucceſs,
And dated France commits it to the preſs.

So Fame reports a diplomatic Peer
Happened too late ſome great event to hear,
But to compenſate for his want of ſpeed
Reſolves to make a merit of the deed,

And to his Court moſt gravely propheſies,
Since none with him in art or cunning vies,
That ſuch a thing muſt ſhortly come to paſs:
The Clerk, who knew his maſter was an aſs,
Wrote underneath—" His Excellence is right,
" This ſage prediction was fulfilled LAST NIGHT."
Lo, what a liſt of CHARACTERS is here!
What glorious TYPES and ARCHETYPES appear,
Whoſe matchleſs forms enchant our wondering eyes!
What ſtilted Dwarfs upon each column riſe!
The DEVIL himſelf begins to ape the God,
And nature changes at his powerful nod.
Britannia riſes from repeated falls
And exiled VIRTUE ſhines in CAPITALS.
His magic proceſs with ſuch haſte diſpatches,
He makes a Miniſtry " of ſhreds and patches;"

Creates

Creates a finiſhed Stateſman in a wink,
And Senators who neither ſpeak nor think;
A Patriot who for gold his honour barters
And blinds us with the glare of ſtars and garters;
Sets beardleſs youth above experienced age,
That even his follies are become the rage.
This FIEND of Delos waves his wand again
Up ſtarts at once a Hippolyte in GRAIN;
Heroes that neither ſenſe nor glory boaſt
And glutton Magiſtrates that rule the roaſt.

With gilded grapes bedecked and curtains green
Thy TEMPLES, from the Church remote, are ſeen;
That with no uſeleſs monuments are graced
But ſeats and tables—in due order placed;
Devoutly heaped with many a cumbrous page;
There wakeful fires increaſe the dog-ſtar's rage;

There oft with emblematic ſaw-duſt round
The "tacit virgin" ſtrews the unhallowed ground,
Which to her feet attached in ſolid clod
Preſents an offering—worthy of the God.
There the pale Imp his work of darkneſs hatches
And the door opens without bolts or latches.
There the pert Coxcomb oft, that wants a head,
Wears ſome SYMBOLIC EMBLEM in its ſtead.
There in deep corner plunged, "in twilight grey,"
The harmleſs poet yawns his time away,
Or in cloſe converſe joined with Mrs. Slaughter
Oft picks his teeth and dines on toaſt and water.
And there too with the fate of empires big
Some with brown bobs and ſome with tails of pig
Divided from the mob by CASEMENT WALL,
Decrepit Chiefs aſſemble at thy call.

Each

Each in his turn ſome TRICK of ſtate proclaims,
And mutters ſpells of ANTE-Chriſtian names
To charm the ears of inexperienced youth;
To gull the gaping crowd "and lie like truth."
Beneath the cover of devoted zeal,
As jealous guardians of the public weal,
They rage and rattle ſtill inſpired by THEE,
Fluſhed with the fumes of politics and tea.
And like the famed Sicilian turn with eaſe
This ſublunary ball which way they pleaſe.
Amid theſe grave debates ſome cream-faced Lown
With conſequential air ſtruts up and down;
Now upon bench repoſed and now on table,
Talks of his dogs and whores—and ſtinks of ſtable;
Some battered Duke or ſpattered whip or two
Who CUT a figure in the motley crew,

Make

Make up in ſpurs for what in boots they lack
And wave the laſh—and vaniſh in a CRACK.
Some who with four in hand VAST STRIDES have made,
What pity that they are not of the trade!
Who ſwear and bett and daſh through thick and thin,
Strain at the GOAL—and yet are never IN.
While others vent their ſpleen in harſher notes
And to the trump of war attune their throats;
Who look on juſtice as a ſtrange demerit,
And in ASSASSINATIONS ſhow their ſpirit;
Impatient ſtill ſome guiltleſs blood to ſhed
And renovate their brains with kindred lead;
Who as no laws for HONOUR yet are made
And even Ketch witholds his WONTED aid
To rid the world of ſuch pernicious Elves,
Kindly perform his office on themſelves.

Even thoſe reputed moſt in faith ſincere
Are better pleaſed to read their RITUAL here;
Here with the votaries of Bacchus ſit
In SPIRITUAL converſe ſhow their wit,
And often puſh the flowing bumper round
With MYSTIC ſign and PARABOLIC ſound.
Who in the VINEYARD labour but to live;
Who freely have received and freely GIVE;
Their ORGIES celebrate in cloſe divine
And ELEVATE their faith with foreign wine;
Here their PASSOVER eat in bleſſed union
And o'er the ſmoaking banquet hold COMMUNION.
Spurning the narrow limits of the Creed,
In SHILLING PAMPHLETS they delight to bleed;
Raiſe their prophetic eyes from Church to State,
And kindly warn us of impending fate;

Point

Point to the Heavens from whence each bleſſing flows
And with its lightening blaſt the PREMIER's foes.
With faction ſtigmatize the patriot's views
And in a TEXT convey the public news.
Angelic truths with rancorous rage reveal
And preach the Goſpel with POLITIC zeal.
Like heaven-born Miniſters reclined at eaſe
Who grind the poor with taxes when they pleaſe,
Whilſt we o'er rocks and precipices ſtray
Through flowery meads they find an eaſier way;
Wiſely concluding if we look on HIGH
Their failings muſt eſcape the AVERTED eye;
So while our treaſures we lay up in Heaven
They greedily devour the unhallowed leaven,
And keep a twofold paradiſe in view,
Replete with hope—and with poſſeſſion too.

No more with proſelytes they crowd the ſtrand,
Or dwell like STRANGERS in a foreign land,
No more the ſufferings of the needy ſhare,
Like PAMPERED SLAVES they feaſt and fatten there.
Like timid guides conduct us to the brink,
And at the danger firſt begin to ſhrink;
Or ſome great maſter of the nautic trade
Who glories in the pupil he has made,
O'er the CERULEAN PLAIN delights to ſkim
But kindly leaves the galling oar to him;
Even ſo theſe worldly Paſtors lead us on
And bid us finiſh ere they have begun.
Reft of that aid which is our laſt reſort
In vain we look around us for ſupport;
See ridicule increaſe as we advance,
(Even the reſpected Prelate ſmiles aſkance!)

And the poor Convert, every trial paſt,
Finds out that ALL is vanity at laſt.
In thoſe dark moments when fierce doubts aſſail
And ever-cheering Hope begins to fail,
His harraſſed ſoul with keen reproaches grieved
Curſes the fatal hour that he believed,
And covered with accumulated ſhame
Perceives the Prieſt and Levite are the ſame.
In vain they ſummon Xavier from the deep,
Or rouze Ignatius from his iron ſleep;
With more than jeſuitic art pretend
To palliate what they never can defend;
With party-coloured ſhreds of right and wrong
Patch up a gew-gaw for the gaping throng;
Withdraw the radiant form of truth from ſight
Or veil with myſteries her heavenly light;

In vain Hypocriſy extends her hand
To prop a fabric founded on the ſand.
The Bible like a ſtalking-horſe they ride,
Or as the maggot bites can lay aſide.
You'd think the twelve Apoſtles were their tools
And Saints and Prophets nought but errant fools;
Job, Jacob, Joſeph, Jeremy, and Moſes,
Jugglers who have led men by their noſes.
Viſions and Ghoſts no longer they revere
And even at miracles begin to ſneer.
Tobias on the damn'd no more recite,
Voltaire and Mirabeau are more polite.
With conſcious pride they quote their enemies
And propagate belief by infidelities.
In Berenger they find a conſtant friend,
And contemplate in Price their latter end.

Read

Read Boyle and Mablé on the Elements,

And Michiavelli on the Ten Commandments.

Faſtings and prayers no longer crowd the ſhelf

But all religion centers in yourſelf.

Nor manners ſimple nor affections pure

Now make their calling or election ſure;

In great men's ſmiles they find regeneration

And in Court Calendars a new creation,

In each warm ſinecure a happy haven

Or poſt upon a DIOCESE to Heaven.

That Church which erſt was dedicate to God

Which unaffected piety has trod,

Whoſe ever-open door and conſtant prayer

Induced the ſoul to place its refuge there,

The dwindled rate can ſcarce from ruin ſave,

As damp and diſmal as the Furies' cave,

Where

Where precept and example were combined
And moral virtues were by faith refined,
Whoſe ſolemn aſpect bad the world adore,
Its happy influence is felt no more;
Nor to the heart its wonted aid ſupplies,
The ſource impure of politics and lies.
Far other cares their roving minds employ,
Low-thoughted care, and ſublunary joy;
THEE they invoke with many a potent knock,
Bleſs the propitious die and curſe their flock.
Who to their ſcrannel pipes come lamely on,
Or fall away unheeded one by one;
Or by itinerants are led aſtray;
But ſtill they blazon in the face of day.
Nor to thy temples only are confined;
But where thou driveſt—they ſtill poſt on behind.

At

At routs and races the STARCH BAND is ſeen,
At Bath, at Tunbridge, and at Gretna-Green.
Inſpired by thee o'er hill and dale they roam
(For none but by compulſion ſtay at home)
To gorge their palates with ſuperfluous food,
And o'er the panting victim ſmear'd with blood
Theſe proud INVADERS gaze with fond delay
And ranſack earth and ocean for their prey.
Nor yet content to range the ſubject plain
But o'er the HEAVENS extend their impious reign.
Of happy birds deſtroy the harmleſs breed,
And ſee without remorſe Creation bleed;
Through inſtruments of death convey their love,
Saints in the Church and Tyrants in the Grove.
Even Chriſtian Charity is waxed cold,
The Lambs of Chriſt are Tygers of the fold;

The humble Sowers that went forth to ſow,
The Vicars of his VENGEANCE here below.
But they who in theſe purlieus moſt are ſeen
Are parti-coloured gentry, GREY and GREEN,
Who at each place of high reſort are known
And by new coats and faſhions gain renown.
With ſtripes of ſcarlet to attract the ſight,
Like Grooms or pariſh Beadles richly dight.
Who center all their virtues in a cuff
And ſtrut moſt ROYALLY in blue and buff;
Who think a plain coat is a deadly ſin;
Toad-eaters, humble friends, and whippers in;
With graven images bedizen'd o'er
The ſymbols of the idol they adore.
As ſome have fondly thought that chemic ſkill
Can turn all metals into gold at will,

They

They fancy all perfection in his ſight,
All virtue in hereditary right.
Sometimes their homage to the SUN they pay,
At early dawn perceive the future day;
Sometimes ſit brooding o'er the DAKKENED lawn
And in DEEP FURROWS hail the approach of dawn.
Their ſocial ſpirit ſickens in the ſhade,
For ſcenes of mirth and flirting folly made;
Where ſpendthrift heirs conſume the frugal hoard
And flaring tapers crown the genial board;
Where thronging gueſts conceal the ſumptuous floor
And brawny Swiſs ſits ſprawling at the door.
No object but themſelves do they purſue,
And like Narciſſus keep it ſtill in view;
All art and ſcience ſcornfully diſown,
Their only wiſh to know and to be known.

Although

Although for taſte their TRADESMEN give them credit
And pay perpetual tribute to their merit.
No more by owls-light mope their time away,
But flirt and frizzle all the live-long day.
No more in ſniveling tone aſk—"How d'ye do?"
Bŭt cry "Bad news from India—Stocks are low!"
Diſdaining acts of feigned civility,
Proclaim at once the bold uncovered lye.
O'er patent lamps eternal revels keep,
Deſpiſe their natural reſt and "murder ſleep."
At all religions they affect to ſmile,
Their HIGHEST triumph is a GIG in ſtile.
If chance they miſs a crowded Park or play,
Exclaim like Titus "I have loſt a day."
Talk of the world with ſuch conceit and phlegm,
You'd think three parts at leaſt belonged to them,

That

That thoſe they did not know were of the herd,
Mere lifeleſs beings, actually interred!
Even ſo our Parents viewed this pendant ball
And thought the leaſt of Nature's works was all.
As if Mars, Merc'ry, (names that I've forgot)
Planets, Moons, fixed Stars, Comets and what not,
Were only meant to glare upon the ground,
Like lamps or farthing candles ſtuck around,
Mere baubles to delight the baby eye;
As if that all-ſurpaſſing luminary
That new-diſcovered planet George our King
Was meant to light us—but 'tis no ſuch thing.
Liberal good ſouls! who all our crimes forgive
Provided they have taught us how to LIVE;
Nor aſk if we are juſt, good, valiant, able—
But take a ſly peep at our vault or ſtable,

And if our wines and ſteeds are of the beſt
Give us a generous credit for the reſt.
Care not a ſtraw for High-Church, Whig or Tory,
And without drum or trumpet tell their ſtory.
Boaſt of more conqueſts than e'er Waller ſung,
With peers, like manna, dropping from his tongue.
The friendly party too they love to ſhare
And often keep their frugal commons there,
But if a greater than their hoſt comes in
They STARE like houſehold rat in trap or gin.
At levees ſtill appear with heads awry,
If haply they can catch his Lordſhip's eye
Behold their cheeks are fluſhed with ecſtaſies!
Behold the rapt ſoul ſitting in their eyes!
With lowlieſt reverence in his preſence ſtand,
(You'd think he offered them his houſe and land)

Each feature feels the animating ray,
The half-ſuſpended pulſe forgets to play,
In endleſs perſpective their teeth appear,
The eye no more can ſee, nor ear can hear,
Abſorbed like Saints in beatific viſion!
Upon their EQUALS ſcowl with high deriſion;
But for the great have ſuch a wonderous yearning
They think a nod or ſmile prodigious earning.

All theſe and more come flocking to thy ſhrine
And take thy balderdaſh for truths divine;
By mutual contract bound and double fee
That thou ſhouldſt plead for them and they for thee.
As to thy KINSMAN, in good books we're told,
Degenerate mortals ſold themſelves for gold,
(But found at laſt it was an arrant bite)
Theſe true diſciples read what thou doſt write,

Fowl,

Fowl, fiſh, and fleſh, devoutly gobble down
Provided thou wilt raiſe them to renown.
From Hecatombs of heterogeneous ſtuff,
Flat, flimſy, crude, concocted, tart and puff,
Select a banquet ſeaſoned to their taſte,
That they may riot o'er the rich repaſt;
Of thoſe who die outright—or die in rhyme,
Whom time has killed—or Authors who kill time,
Indian alliances—rupees in lacks,
Martyrs in NUMBERS—advertiſing Quacks.
What Harlots blaze—what Peereſs gives a rout,
What faſhions—or diſtempers are broke out,
With hints how people of the ton ſhould live;
Decked with more charms than even wealth can give,
Wife, witty, knowing, handſome, young, and gay,
At the cheap rate of four-pence every day.

What

What thy good friends the Miniſters are doing;

Who ſings beſt to the tune of Britain's ruin;

That they may catch their meaſures as they roll,

Dart their prophetic eyes from pole to pole,

And wiſely ſettle all affairs of ſtate;

Their ſmile is happineſs, their frown is fate.

With ſuch fell rage they preach the wrath to come

Our very bowels yearn for Chriſtendom.

Change the politic hemiſphere at will

And ſcrew it high or low to ſhow their ſkill.

Aſcribe deſert to popularity,

And all our bleſſings to the powers that BE.

As if the kingdom were a roundabout

Made with a handle, called the revelrout,

Which CERTAIN MEN can turn which way they pleaſe;

Or like a game of cheſs, or fox and geeſe,

Or wire-drawn images that fall or ſtand
As the chief Juggler moves them under hand.
Diſpatch our natural enemies in a tiff
And blow out rank rebellion with a whiff;
See blunders that eſcaped the public view
Diſſolve old treaties and eſtabliſh new;
Reform the Catholic, expel the Turk,
And with the harmleſs Hindoos make damned work;
Pity poor ſouls deprived of Goſpel light—
Behold their neighbours periſh in their ſight!
Extol the luxury of doing good—
And bury all their injuries in blood!
  Grateful to all who can promote thy ends,
Thou ſhareſt even the ſceptre with thy friends
Who to ſuch helliſh dignities aſpire,
Touched with a ſpark of true ſulphureous fire;

Who

Who oft with thee delude the ſauntering throng
Fraught with oracular impoſture ſtrong;
And oft on weighty embaſſies are ſent;
Or when thy ſage predictions have no vent,
But wander, owl-like, flapping up and down
Their noxious pinions o'er the empty town,
With many an EARTH-BORN deity in tow,
Like dim lights twinkling through a Puppet-ſhow,
Or buſkin'd heroes ſkewer'd on bullock's back
In letters capital both red and black
Expoſe THEMSELVES for ſale, top, tail, and middle,
In ſome quaint epigram, device, or riddle;
As Jacob's ewes ſurveyed the ſtriped rods
That we may gaze upon theſe wooden gods;
Dwell on their frolicks, learn their names by rote,
Admire their grandeur though not worth a groat;

Their

Their ſallies and retires delighted view;
Repeat their old jokes and imagine new;
Cry, courage! to the field! and ſcour amain
To talk their great atchievements o'er again,
Of ſtags, hares, foxes, broken knees and pates,
Rivers, brooks, ditches, bogs, and five-barr'd gates,
The glorious perils of the chace to tell!
What hunters breathed their laſt! what huntſmen fell!
How the poor deer at yawning gulfs turn'd ſhort,
Or plunging in the deep "made damned good ſport!"
Thought men more kind than dogs, but was miſtaken,
And under SHELTER OF A HOUSE was taken.
Forego the charm of our domeſtic ties
To contemplate theſe mock divinities,
That in broad characters adorn thy ſheet—
Like bankrupt beaus ADMITTED to the Fleet.

Soi-diſant

Soi-diſant Wits and counterfeited Squires,
And KNIGHTED Quenchers of unhallowed fires,
Rapacious Prieſts who climb into the fold
And ſcarecrow Nabobs yellow as their gold;
Who walked the Mall, who danced at Almack's Rooms,
Or at the birth-night ſpread their borrowed plumes,
Or chouſed a friend to fee an Editor,
Vexed with their OUTGOINGS like a Creditor.

Though theſe are nought (deny the truth who can)
Stupendous greatneſs glitters in the van.
Monarchs with brawny brats and tight Princeſſes,
Lords, Dukes, Earls, Marquiſſes and Marchioneſſes,
Grace and without grace (ſtuff that makes one ſick)
Chamber-Lords, Maids of all work, and Gold Stick,
Premiers, Ambaſſadors, and Plenipos,
And minor great men with their names in rows;

Like

Like a long bill of fare before we dine,

"Eels, pigeons, calf's head, gudgeons, chitterlings and chine"

We read the COSTLY lift and yawn at every line.

If in this PAGEANT of authority,

This VACANT TITLE to credulity

That even benighted pagans would difclaim,

Where LIBELS dignify and PUFFS defame,

Where under cover of a Lion's ſkin

The Aſs's ears moſt palpably are ſeen,

This PIOUS prelude to deceit and lies,

This prototype of inſipidities,

Where all the traſh and trumpery of the age

Conſpire to decorate the motley page,

This cup whoſe outſide is made neat and clean

But full of rage and ravening within,

This

This faithful mirror of quotidian crimes
That ill reflects the tales of other times,
This worſe than prieſtcraft, hereſy, or ſchiſm,
Or even the tenfold night of jeſuitiſm,
That of all ſenſe and virtue is the bane;
Where miſcreant wretches hold eternal reign,
And of their better qualities bereft
Would mar the little remnant WE have left;
Before high Heaven their antic tricks diſplay,
Proclaim their vices in the face of day,
Subvert the juſtice of impartial Heaven
And add their mite where millions have been given,
That which they cannot controvert deride
And take provoking gold on either ſide,
Debaſe the noble, praiſe th' inglorious deed,
And ſwear alike to Alcoran or Creed,

Confound

Confound the poor and mean, the rich and great,
And place perfection in a good eſtate,
Like Midas ſit in judgment on the town
And rudely cuff aſpiring talents down,
Or tired of proſtituting praiſe and blame
Sagaciouſly repeat the voice of fame,
That all things can aſſert and all deny
And ring the changes of duplicity
To curry favour or to ſhow their wit,
(Or ſome have rather thought the want of it)
Glean, copy, imitate, tranſcribe, repeat,
Lie, ſhuffle, backbite, paſquinade, and cheat,
Prompted by heaven-deſcended inſpiration—
If in this SANCTUARY of pollution
Deſpiſed Philoſophy ſhould raiſe her head,
At thy INFERNAL bidding deign to plead,

And to the poiſoned ears of erring youth
Like unfeed Counſel ſpeak the honeſt truth;
If ſome more potent charmer ſhould invade
Or bid theſe diabolic honours fade,
Withdraw this Pandemonium from the ſight
And tell us plainly what is juſt and right,
Too late their ſaving leſſons we deſcry;
The altered ſtile accelerates the eye;
Unſeen alike by ſavage or by ſage
Their fine-drawn threads eke out the ſcanty page.
Like ſome rich veſtment become old or ſhort
That comic actors often wear for ſport,
Where many a hideous rent is ſeen
And tints diſcordant fill the ſpace between;
Or arcs of triumph at the Grocers' feaſt
With mimic roſe-buds decked or leaves at leaſt,

In

In Roman characters on every bow
The moral poſy dignifies the ſhow.
Even ſo their MODELESS maxims they advance
That ſcarce attract one tranſitory glance,
But with thy frothy fabrics paſs away,
The ſhort-lived beings of a ſummer's day;
In baſkets crammed, or on old caſements ſpread,
Together RENT if not together read;
Or BASELY ſmeared are ſcattered here and there
"And waſte their ſweetneſs in the deſart air."
So the fair whitethorn blooms on Scottiſh ſtrand
Whoſe balmy flowerets o'er the reeking land
By the bleak northern blaſt are rudely blown;
So honeſt Don gives lectures to the town,
Perched in the corner of an empty room.
With what parade the rich man meets his doom!

While

While in ſmall letters that elude the ſight
The Sage and Patriot often take their flight;
'Mid ſtocks and ſhip news in odd corners lie,
Unſeen on earth, unheeded when they die.
Who ne'er chopt logick in a long debate,
Nor roared with airs of piety elate
Like a blaſpheming Bully, for their God,
But the plain ſimple path of juſtice trod;
Whoſe private virtues were a public good,
By few expreſſed, by fewer underſtood;
While Hypocrites ſtill go off in a puff
And ſtink in dying like a candle's ſnuff.
Even thoſe, who truſting to the choſen few
Expoſe their miſeries to public view,
Their waſted pittance bitterly deplore;
The Widow's feeble cries are heard no more;

While boaſting Sycophants attract the eye
Her famiſhed infants unaſſiſted die.
Where lies the blame? Pernicious ſlave, with thee!
Not even the wages of venality
Nor all the dark conſpiracies of ſtate
Which thou haſt raſhly ſworn to vindicate
Afford a plea for ſuch delinquencies,
Such predelection of iniquities!
That thou, whoſe print in every clime is read,
From Nootka to Bengal, from frozen ſeas to red,
Which if it were the vehicle of truth
Had rouſed the ſpirits of our ſlumbering youth,
In adamantine chains their follies bound,
Wide as the ſun had ſcattered bleſſings round,
Shouldſt thus infeſt us with envenomed rage,
And ſhed diſaſtrous twilight on the age;

Degrade

Degrade our patriot efforts as they riſe
With all that hell-born malice can deviſe,
That better judgements may be loſt in air,
And this vile game of hoodwink brought to bear,
This handy-dandy betwixt Knave and King,
Contaminate the ſource from whence they ſpring.

Do ſuch weak outworks then protect the laws?
Does nought but calumny ſupport thy cauſe?
Is all that we have learned an arrant lie?
Is honour ſacrificed to loyalty?
Muſt thoſe unvalued mines of claſſic lore
Delight the metamorphoſed age no more?
Muſt Sages who of Kings have been the guide,
Like ancient Calendars be laid aſide,
And their exalted precepts, once our boaſt,
In this wild vortex of our follies loſt?

Where,

Where, ſtrange to tell, in manhood's early prime
Whole hours of their ineſtimable time
Our all-accompliſhed heroes paſs away,
" From morn to dewy eve, a ſummer's day."
Or when the ſabbath checks their mad career,
When others go ſome ſaving truths to hear,
Or raiſe their notes in melody divine,
Doat on the tumbled page and pore on every line;
Or in faint ſlumbers cry, " Now ſeven's the main!"
Then rouſe and yawn, and read it o'er again.
Muſt liſtening nations be for ever told
How lame Ducks waddled, and how boroughs ſold?
Of hounds, hawks, horſes, battles loſt or won?
Of every creature's virtues but our own?
Of Weeks's Automate that plays the viol?
Or of the Prince's bow at Haſtings' trial?

Where

(Where the loud calls of juſtice ſtill are ſlighted,
In the dark labyrinth of crimes benighted.)
Muſt endleſs catalogues our eye-balls ſtrain,
Where the balked judgement roams about in vain,
Sickens o'er catgut and eternal baſes
And the dull mimickry of airs and graces?
Still read of Black-legs and Caſtratos vile,
And Knights of Induſtry who live in ſtile,
Knaves that no honeſt man would wiſh to know
From June to January where they go?

Muſt bluſtering Bobadils thy columns fill
Who bawl at Clubs and in the Houſe ſit ſtill?
Who would forſwear their Saviour for the cup,
Who "to that IMAGE by the King ſet up,"
Like Eſau ſell their birthrights, to that calf of BRASS
Gifted with ſpeech indeed, but dull as Balaam's Aſs.

Ah!

Ah! prithee turn thy thoughts from themes like theſe
To themes that may at once inſtruct and pleaſe.
Here all reproach and ridicule ſhall end,
And even thy Satiriſt ſhall be thy friend.
Diſclaim the ſenſeleſs twang of faſhion's ſchool
Nor ape the jargon of each liſping fool.
Wouldſt thou command a univerſal ſale
Let even-handed Juſtice hold the ſcale;
Let one bright ſally for the paſt atone,
And make the cauſe of innocence thine own.
Or if the great muſt needs in FRONT appear,
With MANY A USEFUL HINT bring up the rear.
SOMETIMES at leaſt let merit find a place
And poverty no longer be diſgrace.
Still in each page impartial truth preſide,
And her eternal dictates be thy guide.

Wouldſt thou abound in beauties ever new,
Diſcloſe HER MAJESTY to public view.
She amply will repay thy fond regard
And tenfold profit ſhall be thy reward,
In living characters thy worth pourtray,
(But pomp and faſhion ſoon muſt paſs away)
And each aſpiring youth thy praiſe reſound
When all THEIR tarniſhed bays lie withering on the ground.

No more wilt thou lament thy leſſened fame
Nor ſicken when thou hearſt a rival's name,
Proclaim thy merits or his faults bemoan,
Nor on his trampled rights aſſert thine own;
Nor of the freedom of the preſs complain
And render all its ſage reſtrictions vain;
(The friends of freedom with diſcretion uſe it,
Its enemies are thoſe who moſt abuſe it.)

Her

HER favouring power ſhall ſhelter thee from harm,
And the fell Council's venal rage diſarm;
Preſerve thy ſubſtance from his ravenous maw,
Thy perſon from the limbo of the law;
From this poetic limbo too ſhall ſave,
Extend redemption even beyond the grave;
From real and fictitious pains releaſe
" And reinſtate thee on the rock of peace."
Thy wit ſhall then with Attic luſtre ſhine
And all the INSIGNIA OF DESERT be thine;
Their hovering wings ſhall guardian angels ſpread,
And DELPHIC honours thicken round thy head.

FINIS.